



Nature Study

Each Friday morning, you will go through two of our nature cards. They are labeled in the upper right corner with the corresponding week. These are short, factual cards with images to help your child become familiar with objects in the natural world.

As you progress through our sessions, you may find it handy to keep your past nature cards in a binder for easy reference when your children come across a familiar object. These seeds you are planting will grow into a wonderful garden of knowledge for your children in years to come.

As you explore nature outside your home, watch and listen for newly discovered delights. Most of all, remember...

"Point to some lovely flower or gracious tree, not only as a beautiful work, but as a beautiful thought of God."

~ Charlotte Mason

Nature Study



Bald Eagle 1

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

- Bald eagles are birds native to North America with sharp talons, piercing yellow eyes, and dark brown and white feathers. They have hooked, bright yellow beaks and yellow, featherless feet.
- The word “bald” in their name is taken from an old English definition of the word, meaning “white head” or “white face.” This is because bald eagles have distinctive white feathers on their heads, as well as on their tails.
- Bald eagles are symbolic in the United States, and are the country’s national bird.
- Despite this fact, eagles nearly went extinct in the U.S., and it was only thanks to preventative measures and conservation efforts that their population recovered, shifting off the endangered list in 1995.



Giant Panda 1

Ailuropoda melanoleuca

- Giant pandas, also known as pandas or panda bears, are a type of bear from China with white fur and distinctive black markings around their eyes, ears, shoulders, and legs.
- They are large and round, weighing around 220-254 lbs when fully grown.
- Pandas are found on the slopes of mountains at high elevations, and usually live by themselves rather than in a group.
- Giant panda diets consist mainly of bamboo, which is actually toxic and contains cyanide when raw. Due to this, the bacteria in panda stomachs have adapted to be able to digest cyanide, which they mostly expel through waste.
- Pandas are considered a vulnerable species, and the most recent survey from 2016 estimated there were only about 2,060 of these bears worldwide.



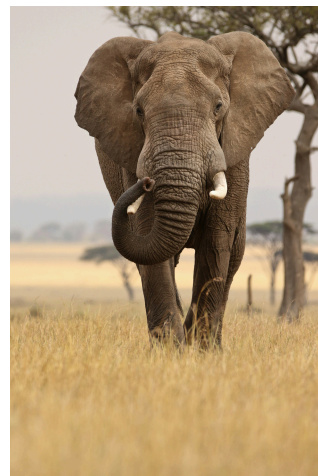
Blue Whale 2

Balaenoptera musculus

- Blue whales are massive ocean-dwelling mammals with broad heads, grey-blue skin, lighter yellow-ish underbellies, wide flippers, and twin blowholes.
- They can grow up to 100 feet long and 200 tons in weight. This makes blue whales not only the largest animal in the

world today, but the largest known animal to have ever lived throughout history!

- Though blue whales typically have a lifespan of 80-90 years, this has been threatened by humans hunting them to near extinction, along with other man-made threats like ships and pollution. They are now on the endangered species list.
- Blue whales use a feature called baleen plates (similar to the teeth of a comb) like a sieve, taking large mouthfuls of ocean water into their mouths and straining small creatures from the water called krill, which they feed on.



African Elephant 2

Loxodonta

- African elephants are large herbivores with grey skin, ivory tusks, long, flexible trunks, and wide ears.
- There are two types of African elephants- the African bush elephant (the larger variety) and the African forest elephant (which are relatively smaller). Both are endangered because of habitat loss and human hunting.
- The wide, large ears of the African elephant are used to keep them cool during hot weather because when they flap them, they act like fans. When exposed by the movement, the inner parts of their ears also help to regulate body temperature, cooling them rapidly.
- Both male and female African elephants have tusks, which are used to spar with other elephants, fend off predators, and dig for food such as roots.



Bengal Tiger 3

Panthera tigris tigris

- Bengal tigers are large wildcats with yellow-orange fur, brown-black stripes, and lighter white markings on their face, chest, and underbellies.
- Bengal tigers live throughout India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and various parts of China and Nepal.
- Though these tigers used to have a more extensive territory, their numbers have dwindled, with significant losses due to humans taking over their habitat as well as by large amounts of poaching.
- Bengal tigers are carnivorous in nature and eat meat such as boars, water buffalo, takin, deer, and even livestock (due to humans now living near their habitats).



Mountain Gorilla 3

Gorilla beringei beringei

- Mountain gorillas are large furry apes that live in various parts of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Adult males are known as silverbacks; this is because the fur on their backs turns a silvery-grey when they reach maturity.
- Mountain gorillas are mostly herbivorous, eating plant roots, leaves, bark, and shoots, though they will occasionally supplement their diet with insects and fungi.
- They are very social and live in large groups typically governed by a silverback, whose job it is to lead and protect the group.
- Mountain gorillas are endangered, with their population numbers reaching as low as 254 wild gorillas worldwide in 1984. Since then, conservation efforts have led to their numbers gradually increasing, with their population reaching about 1,063 total today.



Black Rhinoceros 4

Diceros bicornis

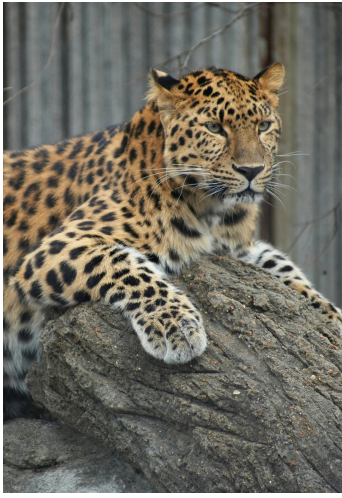
- The black rhinoceros is a type of large animal from Southern Africa and East Africa with thick grey or brown skin, two horns, stout, sturdy legs, and pointed upper lips.
- Their pointed upper lips are used to grab at taller grasses and leaves when feeding.
- Black rhinos have double horns, one longer and one smaller, positioned above their snouts. They use these horns to dig for food and break branches, as well as for self-defense.
- They have very tough skin that serves as a protection against environmental hazards like sharp vegetation.
- Black rhinos are critically endangered because their habitats have been largely taken over by humans, and they are often hunted illegally, both for sport and for their horns.



Sea Turtle 4

Chelonioidea

- Sea turtles are a type of marine animal with seven different species: leatherbacks, olive ridley, Kemp's ridley, green sea turtles, loggerheads, flatbacks, and hawksbills.
- 6 of the 7 species have hard outer shells that encase their softer, more vulnerable bodies, while the leatherhead, the final species, has a softer, leather-like shell.
- Sea turtles breathe air, so they must surface to take in oxygen, typically diving beneath the waves and holding their breath for 5-40 minutes when awake, or 4-7 hours when asleep.
- 5 out of the 7 species are on the list of threatened species, with their populations dwindling due to factors like ocean pollution, fishing, and global warming.



Amur Leopard 5

Panthera pardus orientalis

- Amur leopards are wildcats native to China and Russia with cream-colored fur and distinctive black spots called "rosettes."
- Amur leopards used to also live in North and South Korea, but were driven to local extinction there by hunters, particularly under Japanese

occupation in the early 20th century.

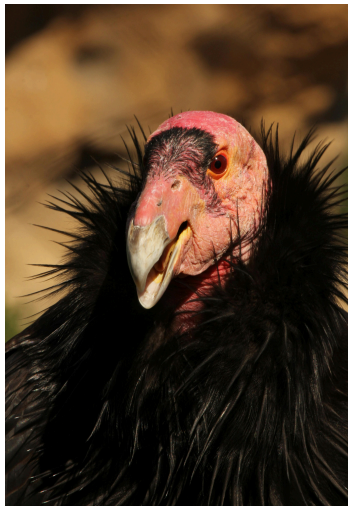
- Amur leopards are critically endangered, and in 2007, there were only roughly 19-26 animals estimated to be living in the wild. Thankfully, their numbers have replenished slightly, with more recent estimates putting them at around 130 adults in the wild.
- Amur leopards have thick fur and are accustomed to living in cold, snowy, mountainous climates, where they live in relative isolation, hunting prey such as the silka deer.



Grey Wolf 5

Canis lupus

- Grey wolves are a type of canine with thick fur that is typically multicolored with mottled grey, brown, black, and white sections.
- However, a type of grey wolf that lives in the Arctic has primarily white fur to act as camouflage.
- It is distinguished from other Canis species by its larger size and less pointed features, particularly on the ears and muzzle.
- They are the only species of Canis to have a range encompassing both Eurasia and North America.
- Grey wolves live in packs and are a highly social species, often living in groups of families with a mom, a dad, and their offspring. They typically hunt together as a group, helping take down larger prey as a team.



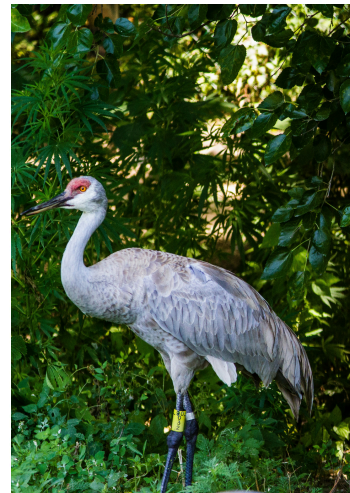
California Condor 6

Gymnogyps californianus

- California condors are a type vulture native to North America, and are the largest land birds in the region.
- They have black feathers with a ruff around their neck, a white streak on the underside of their wings, and a bald head with pink, red or

yellowish skin.

- The skin on their heads can change colors according to their moods, flushing (much like how we blush) in response to different emotions.
- California condors are critically endangered, and their numbers had dwindled so low in 1987 that the remaining wild birds were captured in order to save the species, making them functionally extinct in the wild.
- Since then, conservationists have begun successfully releasing birds into the wild again in states like Arizona, Utah, and California.



Whooping Crane 6

Grus americana

- Whooping cranes are a species of North American cranes with white feathers, black-tipped wings, a red marking on the crowns of their heads, black feathers near their beaks, and long, skinny black legs.
- They are named after the call they emit, which makes a "whooping" sound.
- Though whooping cranes typically live 22-30 years in the wild, their species has nearly gone extinct, with just 21 wild birds surviving in 1941.
- Their populations have begun a slow and gradual recovery due to conservation efforts, and in 2025, about 700 individuals were recorded living in the wild, with 130 more birds living in captivity.